



## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

March 15, 2005

### **S. 128**

#### **Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act**

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
on February 16, 2005*

S. 128 would add approximately 300,000 acres of federal land located primarily in the Mendocino National Forest and the Six Rivers National Forest to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Subject to valid existing rights, each new area designated as wilderness would be withdrawn from programs to develop mineral or geothermal resources. The legislation also would allow five existing wilderness study areas to be released from consideration for wilderness status. In addition, S. 128 would designate the Elkhorn Ridge Potential Wilderness Area as wilderness after appropriate ecological restoration of the land.

Based on information provided by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), CBO estimates that implementing S. 128 would cost \$1 million over the next three years, subject to the availability of appropriated funds. This amount would be used by the agencies to restore damaged lands to be added to the wilderness system and to complete various studies and resource surveys required by the legislation. We estimate that additional planning and administrative costs to manage the new wilderness areas would be less than \$500,000 annually.

By designating federal lands as wilderness areas (and thus unavailable for timber harvesting), enacting S. 128 would result in forgone offsetting receipts (a credit against direct spending). Based on information provided by the Forest Service and BLM, CBO estimates that enacting S. 128 would result in forgone offsetting receipts of less than \$500,000 in any year, but totaling about \$5 million over the 2006-2015 period. (Enacting the bill would not affect revenues.)

S. 128 also would make other changes affecting public lands in northern California, including releasing certain land from consideration as potential wilderness and designating new areas for wilderness study, but CBO estimates that none of these changes would have any significant effect on the federal budget.

S. 128 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act. Because this bill is expected to result in forgone federal timber receipts in California, it also would result in forgone receipts for that state. The federal government pays a portion of timber receipts to the state where those receipts are generated.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Deborah Reis and Matthew Pickford. The estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.